



2024

Annual Report edition 1

PARENTING ACROSS BORDERS

PROGRESS REPORT 2024



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Message From Our Founder

With humility and gratitude, I write these lines reflecting back on a year full of growth and development for Parenting across Borders.

This past year has truly been a time of transformation. Our outreach has grown, bringing in new voices and expanding our impact. The dialogues we've facilitated have been very meaningful and transforming, allowing us to dive deeper into the challenges and joys that international parenting brings. We have not only expanded in numbers but also in diversity, embracing parents from all corners of the world and creating a truly inclusive space for dialogue.

With the transition of leadership within the organisation, the focus has shifted toward building a stronger, more sustainable foundation for the future. Ceren Tunali, a former participant in one of our first dialogue groups, stepping into the role of project leader, has been an exciting new chapter. Her fresh perspective, combined with her deep connection to the community, has already sparked new ideas and developments.

Together, Ceren and the entire team and the organization's board members have worked tirelessly to ensure that our mission remains strong and our values intact while creating sustainable and profound partnerships with different parties and stakeholders in the city. With their commitment and passion and the local partnerships, I am confident that the next chapter will bring even greater opportunities for growth, connection, and impact.

As I take on a more advisory role, I remain incredibly proud of everything we've accomplished, and I am excited to see what lies ahead. The community we've built is more than just an organization; it's a testament to the power of shared experiences, the importance of empathy, and the strength that comes from coming together across borders.

Thank you for being a part of this journey, and here's to many more years of meaningful dialogue, growth, and connection.

Najuan Daadleh-Terpstra
Founder, Parenting across Borders



OUR VISION

At Parenting across Borders, we envision a world where every international parent feels supported, connected, and confident in their journey through parenthood—no matter where they call home.

OUR MISSION

Parenting across Borders supports international parents during their first 1,000 days of parenthood by offering safe, inclusive dialogue groups. Through our programme, we provide spaces for self-reflection, learning, and connection, empowering parents to navigate the challenges of raising children in a new cultural context. We believe that supported and confident parents are better equipped to nurture their children and themselves, leading to thriving families and stronger communities.

OUR VALUES

Respect

We honor the dignity, uniqueness, and lived experiences of every parent and child. We show respect for everyone; regardless of origin, gender, religion, color, language, marital status, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, disability, political beliefs or any other distinctive characteristic.

Honesty & Transparency

We believe in fostering trust through open and transparent communication, both within our team and with the families we support.

Responsibility

We take responsibility for the community we work with.

Hope

We believe in the power of hope as an essential element in any transformation process.

Humility

Every experience and perspective is respected and acknowledged. Our expertise lies in recognizing the different experiences brought to the dialogue process.



MEET THE TEAM

Board members



Rosa Lucassen
President



Elizabeth Groom
Secretary



Özge Bilgili
Treasurer

Team members



Najuan Daadleh-Terpstra
Program Founder & Trainer



Ceren Tunali
Project Leader &
Dialogue Facilitator



Ragna van Willick
Project Coordinator



Frankie Johnson
Project Coordinator &
Dialogue Facilitator

TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS



Ruba Hamzeh
AZC Projects Coordinator
& Dialogue Facilitator



Rafael Rocha
Community Events
Coordinator



Yashpriya Sharma
van der Burg
Communications Officer



Milka Ngina
Social Media Officer



Lucas den Engelsman
Dialogue Facilitator



Noor Mosa Agha
Dialogue Facilitator



Laura Iancu
Newsletter Officer



Sarah Davies
Communications Officer



Mariana Gallo
Dialogue Facilitator



M. Isabelle Barroux
Monitoring & Evaluation
Intern

PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

2024 in reflection

At Parenting across Borders, 2024 was a year filled with meaningful connections and growth. Here's what we achieved together:

7 Community Events

To bring people together beyond the dialogue sessions, we hosted six community events with special guests and themes, and a summer picnic.



4 Dialogue Series

We organized four dialogue series this year. Two special sessions were held for mothers living in asylum seeker centers (AZC), one for English speakers and one for Arabic speakers. Additionally, we hosted a Motherhood Series and a Fatherhood Series for English-speaking parents with immigrant backgrounds.



4 Learning Center Sessions

Our facilitators met four times this year to share ideas, reflect on their work, and improve their skills

1 Facilitator Training

We held a facilitation training for those interested in becoming facilitators with PaB, ensuring the sustainability of our programs.



All of this was possible because of our funders, partners, and dear volunteers. Thank you for believing in our mission and for your constant support.

We look forward to another impactful year in 2025!

DIALOGUE SERIES FOR INTERNATIONAL PARENTS

Creating supportive community

“Becoming a mother far away from home is scary and uncertain, and the dialogue series gave me a sense of reassurance and calmness. In addition, it gave me a community and a support network.” - mother



Becoming a parent is a life-changing experience, but for international parents, it can often feel lonely and overwhelming. Far from the familiarity of home, family, and cultural norms, many parents struggle to navigate parenthood in a foreign country with little support. Research shows that lack of social connections increases stress and feelings of isolation, particularly for new parents (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

These Dialogue Sessions at Parenting across Borders provide a safe and welcoming space for new and expecting parents to connect, share their experiences openly, and seek support. Held in accessible locations, these sessions are tailored to meet the unique needs of international parents, addressing the dual challenge of balancing cultural expectations from home and their host country (Bornstein, 2017).

The first 1,000 days of a child’s life are critical, for parents as they build confidence in their role. Stress and isolation during this period can negatively affect them and child’s development (Black et al., 2017).

Programs like ours have been shown to reduce parental stress and promote better outcomes for international families, particularly those navigating cross-cultural parenting (Wong et al., 2010).

At Parenting across Borders we believe every parent deserves to feel supported and confident. Through our program, we aim to make the parenting journey joyful—and much less lonely—for international families.



MOTHERS IN DIALOGUE

Mothers with an immigrant background



June-September 2024



Welkomhuis Utrecht



6 mothers experiencing the first 1000 days of motherhood

In summer 2024, we conducted a dialogue series for international mothers in Utrecht, welcoming participants from diverse socio-cultural and migration backgrounds. Tailored for mothers with children under three years old, this dialogue series engaged six immigrant mothers in meaningful discussions.

First-time parents often feel unsure about where to seek help or whom to turn to. This series provided a safe and supportive space for mothers to reflect, connect and share their challenges and aspirations as new mothers navigating life in a foreign country.

Format and Main Session Themes

- Introduction to the dialogue and transition to motherhood
- Shifting identities
- Post-delivery and building a support system matrix
- Needs-based communication - guest speaker Annemarie Sweeris, expert on conflict resolution
- Raising multilingual kids - guest speaker Dr. Luisa Meroni from Utrecht University
- Reflecting on the whole series and how to move forward independently

Diverse Demographic Participation

Brazil, India, Iran, Italy, Morocco and Sudan.

Mothers unanimously felt less isolated and more confident in their parenting roles in the Netherlands. They also expressed a strong desire to learn how to support their children in navigating dual cultures.

"I thought it would be workshops and small discussions. Turned out to be a complete dialogue and an interconnectedness between mothers very much needed during pregnancy when you have little information and all you have in your mind are doubts."

- mother



FATHERS IN DIALOGUE

Fathers with an immigrant background



October 2024-January 2025



Utrecht



8 fathers experiencing the first 1000 days of fatherhood

From autumn 2024 to early 2025, we conducted our second dialogue series for international fathers living in the Netherlands. Following the success of our pilot in 2023, new fathers in our community expressed a strong interest in joining the fatherhood dialogue series.

This series aimed to provide international fathers in the first 1000 days of parenthood with a safe, non-judgmental space to connect and reflect on the challenges and aspirations they face as new fathers navigating life in a foreign country.

Format and Main Session Themes

- Introduction and reflections on fatherhood journey
- Support network
- Multilingualism with guest speaker Helen Absalom, International School Utrecht
- Parenting styles and emotions in fatherhood
- Self-compassion with guest speaker Luca de Grasso
- Shifting identities
- Closure and next steps moving forward

Diverse Demographic Participation

Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Hungary, Mexico, India, Iran and the USA.

Eight fathers participated in this series. They shared that men often need extra encouragement to be vulnerable and openly discuss their challenges. This is why a dedicated Fatherhood Dialogue series holds such value.

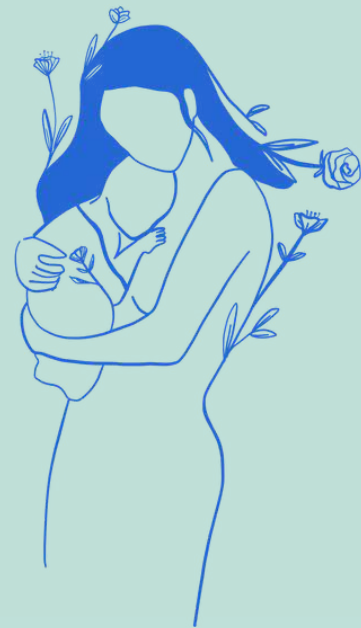
"I anticipated gaining some general parenting advice, but the sessions provided practical tools, insightful discussions, and a supportive community. I felt heard and understood, which was more than I expected"

- father



DIALOGUE SERIES FOR ASYLUM SEEKING PARENTS

Asylum Seekers Centers (AZC)



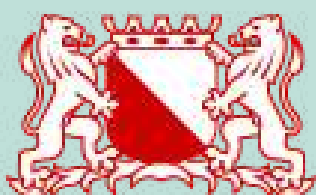
"I am very happy to have the opportunity to share my thoughts and fears with other pregnant women and listen to their experiences. It doesn't make me feel alone."

-mother in AZC

The AZC dialogue program highlighted the importance of accessibility and tailored support for mothers living in asylum centers. These series are designed to meet the specific needs of participant mothers and took place in the locations where they reside.

By addressing key topics such as the health system in the Netherlands, raising kids in a different culture, feeding and eating healthy, contraception and sexuality, and dealing with difficult emotions the series provides mothers with valuable resources, support and connections to help them navigate their parenting journey in the Netherlands.

Parenting across Borders first organized a dialogue series in 2022 in AZC Joseph Haydnlaan in Utrecht. Recognizing the clear need for such an initiative, we held two dedicated dialogue series in 2024, involving many healthcare experts. In 2025, we plan to expand our efforts and reach even more mothers living in asylum centers.



Gemeente Utrecht

MOTHERHOOD FAR FROM HOME

Mothers residing in Asylum Centers (AZC)



September- December 2024



AZC Joseph Haydnlaan & AZC Europalaan



13 mothers experiencing the first 1000 days of motherhood

In 2024, Parenting across Borders hosted two dialogue series for mothers in Utrecht's asylum seekers' centers (AZC). Conducted in English at Joseph Haydnlaan and Arabic at Europalaan, these programs created a safe, supportive space to address the unique needs of mothers living in the asylum centers.

Format and Main Session Themes

- Feeding and eating healthy - Nutrition specialist Rasha Raheem, Sleutelpersonen Utrecht
- Common childhood diseases and Dutch health system - pediatrician Dr. Laura Tiemersma
- Sex education for young kids - youth health nurse Dominique Verleisdonk, JGZ
- Childwish, sexuality and contraception - nurse Engelen Boonstra, Nu Niet Zwanger
- Mental health and self-care practices - yoga instructor & gender specialist Florence Bateson
- Daycare and preschool in the Netherlands - preschool teacher Elma Bayram
- Multilingualism and Dutch education system - Michelle de Jong, Taalschool Utrecht
- Music for little ones and for yourself - musician Jonás Bisquert

Diverse Demographic Participation

Liberia, Nigeria, Syria, Somalia, Palestine, Sudan, Turkey, Eritrea, and Ethiopia.

At AZC Europalaan, sessions focused on mothers with older children (1–4 years), while at Joseph Haydnlaan, they supported pregnant mothers and those with newborns. Each program was tailored to the specific needs of the participants, with regular involvement from a youth health nurse and Parenting across Borders facilitators.

“These sessions have truly helped me build a special bond with the other mothers who joined. They made us feel better and safer.”

-mother



SUMMER SESSIONS AT AZC

Community Activities in Asylum Centers Utrecht

Objectives

- Educate and guide parents on child nutrition and care
- Promote healthy and responsive feeding practices
- Create a supportive environment for parents to share experiences and seek advice.
- Foster open dialogue, address challenges, and provide guidance for parenting in a multicultural setting
- Provide space for parents to clarify concerns about cultural identity

Joseph Haydnlaan

Feeding your baby: Breastfeeding, bottle feeding, and introduction to solid foods.

On August 7th, we hosted a session for parents of children aged 0-3, focusing on baby feeding practices. It featured a presentation, interactive discussions, and a reflection activity to explore best practices. The event concluded with feedback and informal conversations, and many mothers later joined the ongoing dialogue series at this location.

Star Lodge

The differences in parenting between Dutch and participants' home cultures.

On August 14th, 2024, we hosted another interactive session titled "Raising Kids with Different Cultures in the Netherlands". The session aimed to highlight the positive aspects of multiculturalism and addressed the challenges of raising children in a new culture.

Mothers from Syria, Turkey and Iran participated in the session. Mothers arrived in the Netherlands recently.

Pahud

Discussion on Dutch emphasis on rules, alternative discipline methods, and understanding children's rights

On July 15th, we hosted "Raising Kids in Different Cultures", an interactive session featuring Mustapha Bah (Stichting Mowad) and Louay Biram (Stichting Sleutelpersonen). They shared insights on parenting in the Netherlands with a migration background. The event brought together parents from diverse backgrounds, including Colombia, Africa, and Syria.



EXTENDING SUPPORT

Through CommuniTea Activities & Annual Picnic

About CommuniTea

Throughout 2024, we organized six community dialogues on various themes and one picnic. These community events were tailored for parents who had previously participated in one of our dialogue series and for those newly introduced to Parenting across Borders. We see these activities as important steps in strengthening the bond and community belonging of international parents living in Utrecht beyond our dialogue series.



19 January

The Dutch Primary School System

16 February

Child Health Care

15 March

The World of Children's Books

19 April

Multilingualism

17 May

Craft Workshop

7 September

The Summer Picnic

30 November

Practising Non-Violent Communication as Parents

oranje
fonds



DIALOGUE FACILITATOR'S TRAINING & LEARNING CENTER

From March to May 2024, we organised a Dialogue Facilitation Training consisting of six sessions. This training equipped trainees with valuable skills in facilitating group conversations within a dialogue setting.

This training offers international parents and professionals the opportunity to become facilitators in PaB dialogue series and extend the support for international parents.

Facilitators reflections and learnings

The Learning Center serves as a dedicated space for PaB dialogue facilitators to collaborate, engage in peer learning, refine facilitation techniques, enhance session content, and share knowledge.

In 2024, we organized four Learning Center sessions in February, May, September, and November. During these sessions, we explored and practiced Socratic dialogue, active listening, the essential qualities of a facilitator, and the role of silence in the dialogues.

8

new facilitators
trained

15

hours of training
conducted



“Having the privilege to hear other parents’ stories, and hold space for them as they share their vulnerabilities, self-doubts, and concerns as well as joys, triumphs, and learnings has helped me grow immensely—both professionally and personally.”

“I’ve become more sensitive to people’s needs and better able to manage a group in a professional setting. As a fatherhood and masculinities researcher, grounded in qualitative research, and as a fellow parent who understands and relates to the experiences shared, I am able to learn from and be inspired by others.”

“This training has not only equipped facilitators with practical tools but also sparked personal growth and deeper insights into societal topics.”

“A beautiful learning experience.”

Gratitude & Way Forward

My Parenting across Borders journey began three years ago, when I was expecting my first child and navigating parenthood far from home. During my pregnancy, I wasn't fully aware of my needs or expectations as an international parent. That changed when I joined a circle of pregnant women like me—sharing questions, struggles, and reflections in a calm, unhurried space. I realized that I was not alone. For that, I am deeply grateful to Najuan for creating this initiative and a supportive space for parents with a migration background.

My role in PaB began as a facilitator and grew over time. Since March 2024, I have taken over Najuan's role as project leader. I'm honored to continue this work and support PaB as it grows.

As we reflect on the past year, I am deeply grateful for the unwavering support of our stakeholders. Our journey wouldn't be possible without our incredible team, many of whom are international parents themselves. Throughout 2024, I've witnessed their dedication firsthand in supporting parents in our dialogue sessions, helping them connect and building support networks in the Netherlands. Their efforts in creating a welcoming environment have been essential to strengthening our community.

I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to our board members for their trust and support since I took on the role of project leader. Your guidance and encouragement have been invaluable in my journey.

I am deeply thankful to our partners who have supported and promoted our dialogue series across the city. A special thanks to Welkom in Utrecht and COA, whose efforts over the past two years have been instrumental in coordinating dialogue sessions in asylum centers. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dominique Verleisdonk, a JGZ nurse, for her invaluable support in shaping our program and arranging guest speakers for these important sessions.

Additionally, I want to thank our guest speakers who have participated in our sessions, met with parents, enriched their lives, and helped broaden their perspectives on different topics.

A special thanks to our funding partners, Oranjefonds and Gemeente Utrecht, for supporting the PaB dialogue series this past year. Their contributions have been vital in helping parents give their children a strong start in the Netherlands. I also want to acknowledge the municipality advisors from the Public Health Department (Volksgezondheid) for their invaluable guidance, assistance, and referrals. Your contributions have been key to our progress and inspire us to make an even greater impact.

I would also like to thank Welkomhuis Utrecht and DOCK for supporting our initiative and helping us secure spaces for our activities. My gratitude also extends to NIZU and Utrecht Omarmt for recognizing the value of our work and welcoming us as a network member. Their inclusion of Parenting across Borders in the Geboortenetwerk sub-network in Kanaleneiland has greatly amplified the impact of our efforts.

Finally, I want to extend my sincere thanks to our community of international parents for your trust, active participation, and invaluable feedback. An engaged and thriving community of parents is at the heart of Parenting across Borders.

As we step into the next phase of our journey, we reaffirm our commitment to our core values and mission. In the coming year, we aim to expand our dialogue series to reach more parents, enhance our partnerships with local and national organizations, and introduce new series and themes tailored to the needs of international families. With the continued support of our stakeholders, we are confident in our ability to create lasting change and assist parents with a migration background. The road ahead is promising, and we eagerly anticipate another year of growth, collaboration, and impact.

Ceren Tunali
Project Manager



Funding partners



Collaborating partners



Supporting Partners





PARENTING ACROSS BORDERS

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